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Rural Women in Dairying: With Special Reference to Kaira (Kheda) District of Gujarat

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ABSTRACT

Dairying in India is predominantly practised as a subsidiary occupation to agriculture and ensures livelihood to millions of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers. This economic activity is well-established in the state of Gujarat and practised on the cooperative model and contributes a significant share to the India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).The Dairy sector utilises a very large portion of the female labour force who find scope for fuller utilisation in several operations connected with cattle and buffalo rearing. Apart from putting more incomes in the hands of rural women it also gives a sense of empowerment to the rural women folk. The Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union Limited operating under the brand name of "Amul" has been the single largest cooperative experiment in the Dairy sector in the world and serves as an example for more such experiments the world over.

Keywords: dairying, rural, women, Gujarat, Amul, milk.

Introduction:

India is self-sufficient in milk and ranks first in milk production, accounting for 18.5 per cent of world production achieving an annual output of 155.5 million tonnes during 2015-161 as compared to 146.3 million tonnes during 2014-15. This significant achievement is attributable to the cooperative model on which the activity of Dairying is practised in India. There are more than 200 district cooperative milk unions in India, covering about 1.7 lakh villages, reaching out to 15.8 million milk producers of which 4.8 million are women members.

As per the estimate of the survey of major livestock products, milk production has increased to 122.62 lakh tonnes (2015-16) from 64.20 lakh tonnes (2003-04) in the last decade in Gujarat. Per capita availability of milk has been increased 506 (in grams per day) from 333 (grams per day) during interval of 2003-04 to 2015-16 in the state. This figure for the country as a whole has increased from 231 grams per day in 2003-04 to 337 grams per day during the same period.2This feat has been possible due to the 18149 milk cooperative societies functioning at the village level, 89 chilling centres and 13 dairy processing units at 18 district level(dairy)functioning in the state of Gujarat.[3]

The paper aims to study the developments in the dairying sector in Gujarat which is a significant tool for generating income and employment especially in rural India. Also, since dairying is practised in conjunction with agriculture this activity serves as one of the avenues of combating the problem of disguised unemployment which iswidespread in Indian agriculture. The workers in this sector being overwhelmingly women a study of Dairy cooperatives is essential so that similar models of women's empowerment can be emulated elsewhere in the country and the world. TheKaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union Limited of Gujarat operating under the brand name of "Amul" serves as the lens through which this paper looks at the activity of Dairying as a source of empowerment for women folk in the rural areas. The Amul4 pattern of dairying which apart from generating substantial direct employment has also built in potential for generating indirect employment in several ancillary activities like manufacture of feed for livestock, milk processing, and manufacture of milk products, etc. and milk protects human health by supplying rich proteins and nutrients and helps increase the standard of living of the rural masses. The milch animals also provide rich manure for the farmer to raise farm productivity.

The Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union Limited:

The first milk cooperative was formed in 19465 as a result of the outcome of meeting of farmers in the Samarkha village, Kaira[6](Kheda) district. Amul Dairy registered as The Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union Limited, Anand was established in the year 1946 by farmers inspired by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a leading light in the India's freedom movement who envisioned setting up of cooperatives to ensure financial security to farmers in Kaira and to protest against the unfair trade practices of milk traders and middlemen. The Kaira union procured milk from affiliated village-level milk societies. This was the genesis of organized milk marketing in India, a pioneering effort that opened a new vista for dairy development in the

country.The Cooperative was registered by the Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies Bombay Provinces on 14 December 1946. The core feature of the model known as Anand pattern was the farmer's control over the procurement, processing and marketing of milk and milk products. In 1973, theGujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) was established as an apex organizationresponsible for marketing the milk and milk products of cooperative unions in the state of Gujarat.

The strategy for organized dairy development in India was actually conceived in the late 1960s within a few years after the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was founded in 19657. In 1964, on the occasion of the inauguration of Amul's cattlefeed plant, the then Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri impressed by the socio-economic changes brought about by the milk cooperatives, expressed his desire for a national level organization to replicate Anand model dairy cooperatives throughout the country and to make available multi-disciplinary, professional dairy expertise to dairies in the public and cooperative sectors.

Therefore in 1965, NDDB was registered under the Societies Registration Act, the Charitable Trust Act and the Public Trust Act and headquarters established at Anand. Dr. Verghese Kurien known as the "Milkman of India and Father of White Revolution"was made its chairman. Launched in 1970s, Operation Flood Programme[8] was the largest successful programme ever implemented in the world which led to White Revolution of India i.e.to create a flood of milk nationwide by linking rural farmers with their milk supplies to India's metropolitan cities.

The movement led to increased milk production, remove dependency on milk imports and stabilize consumer prices for dairy products. It also improved dairy infrastructure and technology around the world.The White Revolution made India the largest milk producing nation in the world and has made alleviation of poverty and disguised unemployment possible.

In the early phases of Operation Flood, the strategy was to train women in animal husbandry practices and a large number of training programmes were specifically organised for them. Special incentives were given to all "women dairy cooperatives societies"[9] in order to encourage participation of women in the governance of cooperatives. Also, NDDB launched a Women's Dairy Cooperative Leadership Programme" in 1995 as a pilot programme to further strengthen efforts to empower womenby significantly increasing women's participation as active members and as leaders in the governance of cooperative societies,[10] unions and federations as women producers form the major workforce of the dairy sector in the country. The main aim was to train and position local women as resource persons in the village to encourage and support women involvement in their dairy cooperative. According to NDDB's annual report for 2001-02, the number of district unions covered under the women's leadership programme increased to 50 in 2002, with 2,062 cooperatives and 90,000 participants.The number of women who are members of dairy cooperatives increased from 0.62 million in 1986-87 to 2.47 million in 2001-02.

According to the NDDB annual report for 2013, there were 4.38 million women members across the country, of which 3,29,495 were in leadership roles in themanagement committees of village dairy cooperatives and 354 were represented on the boards of unions and state federations.[11]Also, all women registered dairy cooperative societies(DCS)currently is 26,700 of which1.60 lakhsare village dairy cooperative societies. The annual growth rate of all women DCS is about 10%.

Conclusion:

TheAmul Model of dairy development is a three-tiered structure with the dairy cooperative societies at the village level federated under a milk union at the district level and a federation of member unions at the state level[12].Women are involved mainly in the primary production stage of the chain, while men usually are involved in the other stages of the chain, such as marketing and processing. The path breaking success of Amul is attributable to the women in the villages of Gujarat.These women breed cattle, supply milk to the cooperative dairy as well as participate in the management of dairy. Today, women in Gujarat have attained economic independence and are playingactive roles in household matters and decision-making.

In thewords of the Chairman at the 43rd Annual General Body Meeting of GCCMF held on 15th June 2017, "In rural Gujarat, every morning, over 36 lakh women farmers wake up before dawn just to supply fresh milk to their village cooperative society, a quantum of about 200 lakh litres every day. The Amul Model connects 36 lakh farmers of rural Gujarat with 132 crore consumers across India, including 40 crore Indians living in Urban India. Since rural women have a major role to play in the Amul cooperative movement and urban mothers cherish Amul milk and milk products for their children and family, the Amul Model can be aptly described as the world's largest mothers to mother's network. Therefore, it is a network of rural mothers offering milk to urban mothers across India."

Dairying is not just an economic activity but also an integral part of our social and cultural heritage. No other industry touches the lives of millions of farmers

like the Dairy industry. It is a great tool for equitable growth and income distribution. Most of the dairy business in the organised sector is in the hands of cooperatives, which are owned by farmers themselves. Our dairy farmers have ensured food security for our country in one of the most critical dimensions-milk and dairy products. Dairy cooperatives have triggered a socio-economic revolution in rural India by generating gainful employment for the most vulnerable sections of our rural population- the rural women and landless labourers.

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THE SEWA MOVEMENT: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment is an essential prerequisite for the sustainable development of economy. Rural women are the key agents for development and play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational socio-economic and environmental changes required for sustainable development. The limited access to credit, health care and education aggravate the challenges they face in all spheres of life. SEWA Bharat set up in 1982, an all India federation of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) established in Gujarat in 1972, adopts a holistic approach to women's empowerment serving as a model globally.

KEYWORDS: Rural, Women, Empowerment, SEWA, Movement.

INTRODUCTION

The World Bank defines empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.[1] The declaration of international women's decade in the year 1975 brought to forefront the role of women as major partners in the development of an economy. The concept of "women's empowerment" received impetus from the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) which had made its commitment to the objective of "empowering women as the agents of socio-economic change and development".[2] UNIFEM (United Nations Development fund for Women) in its guidelines on women's empowerment (1997) interprets empowerment as a "process where women individually and collectively become aware of how power relations operate in their lives and gain self -confidence and strength to challenge gender inequalities at the household community, national, regional and international levels."

Established in April 1972[3] with 80 informal economy women workers who worked as head-loaders, street vendors, home-based workers, agriculture workers, service providers, hand-cart pullers under the guidance of Smt. Ela Bhatt, the Self-Employed Women's Association(SEWA)[4] is a "movement" of self-employed women in rural and urban India, and is the largest trade union of the country. It has pioneered the empowerment of self-employed women and of women employed in informal economy enterprises (i.e., small, unregistered

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enterprises) where 93 per cent of India's female labour force is employed.[5] SEWA not only provides a voice to the numerous yet unprotected women workers, but also seeks to ensure work and income security, food security and social security for all its members and to promote women's leadership at the micro and macro levels. The paper attempts to understand the concept of women's empowerment on a holistic basis and highlight the efforts initiated towards empowering women using the example of SEWA. It analyses both quantitative and qualitative factors. The paper also studies the effects of globalisation on the informal women workers in the economy particularly in Gujarat and significant role of SEWA in making women self-reliant, self-employed, self-diligent and self-empowered.

Originally, born out of the Textile Labour Association (TLA), Majoor Mahajan, India's oldest and largest union of textile workers, SEWA is now a globally recognized trade union of women workers in the informal economy. In order to secure economic, social, and legal rights for women workers, it supports the formation of member-based organizations of poor working women. The organisation has a total membership of 14,64,506 with 7,34,729 women memberships in Gujarat and 14,64,506 women in India and has been spearheading a movement from village to national and international level. Similarly, it works in the South Asian countries of Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The movement is deepening and expanding while organizing the informal sector women workers globally and giving visibility to their work. It is spearheading the constructive struggle of the informal sector women workers, by the women workers and for the women workers. Gandhian thinking is the guiding force for SEWA's poor, self-employed members in organising for social change. They follow the principles of satya (truth), ahimsa (non-violence), sarvadharma (integrating all faiths, all people) and khadi (propagation of local employment and self-reliance).

In order to understand the concept of women's empowerment on a holistic basis, it becomes necessary to have a look at the integrated approach adopted by SEWA since its establishment. For its strategy of struggle and development, it has chosen two membership-based forms of organization: union and cooperative. Both are democratic forms of organization which can be owned, controlled and run by the workers themselves. Through the union, their members struggle for their rights and to overcome the various injustices they face in their daily lives. They have also built a mass movement of workers which grows rapidly from a local to an international one, grounded in the everyday issues of women workers. Cooperatives work as essential counterparts to the union. Most of the developmental activities are nurtured through its cooperatives which are independent and have their own management committee. In co-operatives, women are worker-owners, not merely labourers. Their promoted cooperatives provide employment, financial services, health and child care and undertake land-based and water-centred activities. Thus, through both struggle and development with the joint action of union and cooperative approach, women are strengthened economically and in all other aspects of their lives. The rural union and district associations work through village level producer groups towards developing livelihoods locally, so that the workers no longer had to migrate out of the towns and cities. The district associations work on addressing these struggles and campaigns to be taken up. The struggle is against many constraints and limitations imposed on them by society and the economy, i.e. struggle for visibility, recognition and their place in the economy while development activities broadly categorised as building their own membership-based organizations creating and strengthening employment, developing financial services, capacity-building, health care, child care, housing services, forestry and nursery- raising programmes, watershed development and insurance, to strengthen women's bargaining power and offer them new alternatives. Their main goal is to organise women for full employment at the household level and for self- reliance. Full employment means the employment that

provides work security, income security, food security and social security- health care, child care, insurance and shelter to women and their families. Self-reliance means making the members autonomous and self-reliant.

The five integrated development programmes that promotes women's self-reliance and full employment are: (a) Organising and advocacy – The local grassroot leaders and volunteers through Mohalla meetings (regular community meetings) help identify gaps, problems and meet solutions to the difficulties the members of the community face. And strengthens women's individual and collective capacities through training, workshops, exposure visits, seminars, and conferences. Specialized training under each program theme such as technical skill building and micro-enterprise training under livelihoods; financial literacy within microfinance etc has been developed. Their members participate in advocacy campaigns and equips women with legal information, awareness through SEWA Shakti Kendra.

(b) Livelihoods- There are several major barriers that constrain the potential earnings of women who work in the informal sector: low-valued skillsets, irregular and minimum wages, inability to penetrate and diversify markets, inability to produce at scale, and weak bargaining power. SEWA invests in the technical, marketing, business, and entrepreneurship skills of informal sector workers in order to increase their wages, diversify their work, and expand their employment opportunities. The organization expands the market opportunities for the women across India by organizing workers and connecting producers to consumers and buyers. It creates and supports women producer-owned cooperatives and producer's companies such as RUDI[6] Multi trading Company Limited in Gujarat that allow producers to work at a wide scale and penetrate larger markets.

(c) Skill development -Women in the informal sector are eager to develop their skills in order to enhance their livelihoods, but do not have access to opportunities. It plays a significant role by investing in the entrepreneurial capital of local producers. Women participants–from agricultural producers to artisans–develop the marketing, sales, design, and business skills to strengthen and grow their businesses. The Skill Development and Vocational Training programmes such as the SEWA polytechnics, diverse youth events, hospitality, beauty culture, computer and digital literacy etc. across India ensures employment, gain access to variety of opportunities and attain financial independence

(d) Social security and health- Health and social security services often does not meet the needs of the low-income group due to information, service and resource gaps. Therefore, SEWA ensures that the social security and health services[7] are delivered equally and fairly to women in the informal sector by information dissemination, awareness generation, and service delivery mechanisms through Sewa Shakti Kendra.

(e) Community led micro-finance- It provides access to financial services through self-help groups, financial cooperatives, and through business correspondent models throughout India. And also leads financial literacy training sessions to help women make better financial decisions, create financial goals, and maximize their financial investments.

As per the annual report of SEWA 2015, in Gujarat, the organisation's rural department organised 7, 34,729 women workers from 14 districts who have formed producer groups in different villages while 9 district associations are functioning. Through rural organisation, in

the districts of Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Mehsana, Kutch, Patan, Surendranagar, Arrvali, Anand, Vadodara, 3,32,369 member's livelihoods were generated where women earned livelihoods of Rs.1,55,55,22,233/- during 2015 with the membership of 1,84,359 and provision of food and nutrition to 1,74,942, child care to 19,504, health to 65,547, housing to 3,358, education to 2,14,849, providing leadership to 77,807 and self-reliance to 1,38,021.[8]
Moreover, the structure of their organisation is democratic where the executive committee members are elected. One representative leader over 200 members is elected in trade committee and the 25 executive committee members are elected out of these elected leaders who hold different positions. All these executive committee members are elected from poor working women members.

The SEWA campaign has spread across the urban streets and the rural villages of India where members of each trade category define their needs and initiate a campaign to achieve their objectives. The major campaigns initiated are based on the areas, trades and issues such as the home-based workers campaign, street vendors campaign, construction workers campaign, waste pickers campaign, minimum wage campaign, campaign for issuing identity cards, urban policies for informal economy workers campaign, social security campaign, water and natural resource campaign-SEWA's millennium campaign: women, water and work, agriculture campaign, green livelihood campaign, forest workers campaign and nutritious food campaign.

Recognising their contribution towards women's empowerment the organisation along with three others namely- The Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, The Working Women's Forum (India), Chennai and The Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi have been recognised under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 for the purpose of filing complaints in Courts against employers for violation of the provisions of this Act.[9]

CONCLUSION

The most effective form of organisation with tangible impact in the field of women's empowerment is the cooperative or Self-Help Group[10] model which is followed by SEWA. The model shows that the formation of mass organizations of poor women at the national, regional and international levels which form strategic alliances with other organisations of the poor, such as trade unions and tenant farmer groups led to the concept of 'empowerment'. SEWA is both an organisation and a movement. The movement is enhanced by its being a confluence of three movements: the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. But it is also a movement of self-employed workers: their own, home-grown movement with women as the leaders. Through their own organisation, women become strong and visible and their tremendous socio-economic contributions become recognised. With globalization, liberalization and other economic changes, there are both new opportunities as well as threats to some traditional areas of employment such as the mechanisation and technological changes. SEWA's development programmes work together to address the chronic socio-economic barriers that women in the informal sector face. Their holistic approach to empowerment strives to achieve 'Eleven Points': Employment, Income, Nutritious Food, Healthcare, Housing, Assets, Education, Childcare, Organized strength, Leadership, Self-reliance.

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Co-Operative Dairying : An Instrument of Rural Development (with special reference to Gujarat)

Dairying in India is one of the most ancient and prominent subsidiary occupations to agriculture. It plays a vital role in improving the rural economy by supplementing farmers' incomes and reducing disguised unemployment by utilizing the available idle family members of the farmers' families. Apart from its role in milk production, the dairying sector contributes a huge quantity of organic manure, which is one of the major inputs in our agriculture. Gujarat is one of the leading states in the Indian dairy sector. The state is a pioneer in Dairy development through cooperative organization being the starting point for the "Operation Flood".

Keywords : Dairying, Gujarat, Co-Operatives, Rural Development.

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Introduction :

Dairying in India is overwhelmingly a rural activity and practised by millions of small holders as a part of mixed farming systems, wherein households combine crops and animal husbandry. In such a system, dairy animals besides generating food for household consumption provide draught power (for cultivation of crops and transportation of goods and services) and dung as manure and fuel while sustaining on crop residues and by-products. This synergy between crops and animals not only sustains household food security but also contributes to the sustainability of the agricultural production system and environment conservation by substituting the non-renewable chemical energy use in crop production(Apte,1993). According to International Cooperative Alliance (2005), a cooperative can be defined as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise".Dairy cooperative is thus, an association of small land-holders, milk producers, marginal farmers and landless labourers organised to produce milk and milk products, collection of milk, carry out research to maintain the quality of milk and bovine, manage the farm, production of fodder and marketing the milk and milk products. Dairy cooperatives are acclaimed as an effective instrument for the economic uplift of the rural poor. The National Commission on Agriculture in its interim report on milk production of 1971 recommended the integrated development of all sections of the rural people in the rural areas and in this context, recommended the increasing demand for milk in large cities, towns and industrial areas should go to small and marginal farmers, and landless labourers. Every effort should be made to promote as much milk production possible through this section of rural population it advised. The Commission suggested an integrated rural development approach based on a system of producer's Cooperatives as developed in Kheda (Kaira) district of Gujarat. The paper aims to trace the development of dairy sector as an organised occupation with cooperative organization playing a prominent role in making dairy a successful and established venture in Gujarat and simultaneously, highlighting its role in transforming the socio-economic changes in the rural sector particularly, in Gujarat and highlights the contribution of dairying both directly in improving rural income and employment, and indirectly in development of rural overheads like construction of roads and approach roads, primary facilities such as rural electrification and health services, building of schools and other public social service organizations and bringing development particularly in the rural sector. Equally significant, is the role and contribution of women who are actively involved in the dairying activity.

The earliest attempts of dairy development can be traced back to British rule, when the Defence department established military dairy farms to ensure the supply of milk and butter to the colonial army which did not had any impact on the supply of milk to the urban consumers which was of major concern to civilian authorities. (Huria and Acharya, 1980). With the growth of population in the urban areas, and to some extent, World War-II gave an impetus to private dairies with modestly modernized processing facilities. PolsonsKeventers and the Express Dairy were some of the

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pioneer urban processing dairies. These dairies contracted middlemen for milk supply and milk producers and consumers were exploited. Therefore, despite modernized processing facilities, dairying remained unorganized.With the initiation of India's First Five-year plan in 1951, modernization of Dairy industry became a priority for the Government. To stimulate milk production Government implemented, the Integrated Cattle Development Project(ICDP), and the Key Village Scheme(KVS), among other similar programmes. But, still the government dairies set up were unable to meet the demands of consumers in the urban areas as there was no organized system of milk procurement.

In the mid-1940s, when the milk producers in Kaira asked for a proportionate share of the trade margins, they were denied. The milk producers went on strike, refusing to supply milk to Polsons. (A private dairy at Anand-procured milk from milk producers through middlemen, processed it and then sent the milk to Bombay, some 425 kms away) (Kortens,1981). Therefore, on the advice of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a leader in the India's independence movement, the milk producers registered the Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union now popularly known as AMUL, in 1946. The Kaira union procured milk from the affiliated village level milk societies. This was the genesis of organised milk marketing in India, a pioneering effort that opened a new vista for dairy development in the country(Gupta,1987)

The strategy for organized dairy development in India was actually conceived in the late 1960s, within a few years after the National Dairy Development Board was founded in 1965. In October 1964, on the occasion of the inauguration of Amul's cattle feed plant, the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, spent the night as the guest of a village cooperative society near Anand (Gujarat). Impressed by the socio-economic changes brought about by the milk cooperatives, expressed the desire for a national level organization to replicate Anand Model dairy cooperatives throughout the country and to make available multi-disciplinary, professional dairy expertise to dairies in the public and cooperative sectors. Thus, in 1965, National Dairy Development Board was registered under the Societies Registration Act, the Charitable Trust Act and the Public Trust Act and headquarters were established at Anand.

With the launch of Operation Flood in 1970, it helped the dairy farmers direct their own development, placing control of the resources they create in their own hands. The bedrock of Operation Flood has been the village milk producer's cooperatives, which procure milk and provide inputs and services, making modern management and technology available to members. Its objectives were to increase milk production, augment rural incomes, fair prices for consumers. Launched in three phases, i.e. Phase I-(1970-1980)-It linked 18 of India's premier milk-sheds with consumers in India's four major metropolitan cities, i.e., Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Madras); Phase II- (1981-85)- It increased the milk sheds from18 to 136; 290 urban markets expanded the outlets for milk. By the end of 1985, a self-sufficient system of 43,000 village cooperatives covering 4.25 million milk producers had become a reality.) Phase III-(1985-1996) -It enabled dairy cooperatives to expand and strengthen the infrastructure required to procure and market increasing volumes of milk. This phase consolidated India's dairy cooperative movement adding 30,000 new dairy cooperatives to the 42,000 existing societies during Phase III.

The Indian dairy sector acquired substantial growth momentum from the Ninth Plan onwards achieving an annual output of 137.6 million tonnes of milk during 2013-14 representing sustained growth in the availability of milk and milk products of the growing population and for whom milk and milk products constitute an important part of food and nutritional supplement. More than 70 million of approximately 147 million households are dependent on dairying for their livelihood. A majority of milk producers have one or two milch animals, and these small producers account for some 70 per cent of the milk production. On an average, 22.5 per cent of the income of rural households is contributed by milk. There are about 100,000 village milk cooperatives with 11 million farmers own 68% of milch animals and contribute nearly 62% of total milk produced. Around 63% of the available animal protein in Indian diet comes from milk(GOI,2001). The first co-operative milk union in Gujarat was set up in 1946 and in 1970-71, Gujarat state had 11 co-operative milk union with 3,079 members and 1,736 primary producers' societies with 3.3 lakh members. Kaira Co-operative Milk Producer's Union Limited started functioning in June 1948, with two villages producing just 250 litres of milk per day. By 1970-71 the union had 706 affiliated societies with 1,80,000 farmer needs. The quantity of milk collected during 1969-70 was 1,24,000 tonnes and the farmers were paid Rs. 19.39 crores. The average daily collection of milk was about 3.40 lakh litres and to Anand and neighbouring town about 50,000 litres increasing to 13,572 (thousands kgs per day) with 17,025 dairy cooperatives in 2013-14.

Therefore, dairying was seen as an instrument of development, generating employment, alleviating poverty and ensuring regular incomes for millions of rural people. According to World Bank, 1999 "Operation Flood can be viewed as a twenty-year experiment, confirming the Rural Development Vision". Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit and inputs to go a long way.in providing the rural people with better prospects for economic development. Improvements in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal

changes also facilitate their social development. Renowned Sociologist B.S.Baviskar explains that "Operation Flood was considered a means of overcoming the barriers of caste, class, and power, something earlier rural development programs had been unable to do." The milk cooperatives also gave assistance for various welfare programmes/ purposes and initiated many rural development activities in the village through various funds raised out of their savings. (Patel V.M., 1987)The trust named Tribhuvandas Foundation funded by village level dairy cooperative societies and Amul was set up to lay emphasis on the prevention of disesases, infant and child care, care of pregnant mothers, child nutrition and income generation activites. In 1992,Amul introduced scholarship schemes to encourage outstanding children of farmers in pursuing higher studies.It also undertakes Self Managing Leadership Programme for women resource persons through Brahmakumarilswariya Vishwa Vidyalaya at Mt. Abu to bring a value based approach in development process. The setting up of women dairy cooperative societies has led to the empowerment of women. The dairy cooperatives in AMUL brought out many benefits to the milk producers in the village through providing a guaranteed market for milk at a fixed price, supply cattle feed at a reasonable cost, regular and efficient veterinary and extension services at the village and there is no parallel to what AMUL has done for the milk producers in Kheda. (Baviskar, B.S.,1990).

Conclusion :

The pace of dairy development in Gujarat was very fast due to assured market, reasonably good prices for milk supplied to the dairy and easy access for all to health care services offered by the co-operative dairy sector. The policy of the state government is to support dairy development through the co-operative sector. Thecooperative movement in this sector starting with Amul Dairy in Kheda district has spread to the districts of Mehsana, Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, Vadodara and Surat. An additional reason for giving importance to dairy development is the scope for rural employment, reduction of pressure of urbanisation and scope for socio-economic changes in rural Gujarat. The state aims at the development of animal husbandry and dairying as an important sector of the state economy because the gross value of output from livestock constitutes about 20 percent of the gross value of the output from agriculture and livestock together that helps generate the best alternative additional income and employment for poor, rural farmers. Milk and milk products constitute the main livestock products by contributing about 80% gross value of output from livestock. (Narayan B.K.,1971). Thus, the success of the dairy industry has resulted from the integrated co-operative system of milk collection, transportation, processing and distribution, conversion of the same to milk powder and products, to minimize seasonal impact on suppliers and buyers, retail distribution of milk and milk products, sharing of profits with the farmer, which are ploughed back to enhance productivity and needs to be emulated by other farm produce/producers. Due to processing facilities in Gujarat being spread out geographically value-added products like ice cream, Shrikhand, butter milk etc have place more disposable income in the hands of rural households besides leading to minimal wastage of milk.

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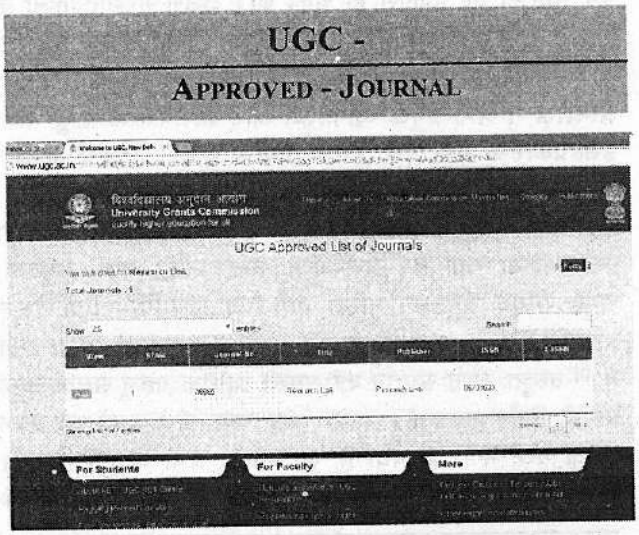

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Special Economic Zones: Women's Livelihood With Special Reference To Gujarat-

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ABSTRACT

Gujarat is the second most industrialized state in India after Maharashtra with 38 percent gross state domestic product constituted by industry in 2006-07. The manufacturing base of the state is highly diversified with over 30 engineering, 13 textiles, 10 food processing and 7 chemical clusters. It is the first state in India to formulate a port policy, to enact the private state participation law to provide a framework for private sector participation in infrastructure projects, and to enact an SEZ Act. Employment generation has been the chief objective behind the establishment of SEZs.

Keywords:SEZ, Women, Gujarat, Livelihood, Employment.

Introduction:

A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a geographical region within a Nation-State in which a distinct legal frame work provides for more liberal economic policies and governance arrangements than prevailinthe countryatlarge. The geographical area snotifie dunderthe SEZ Act, are declared to beoutside the normalcustomsterritoryofIndia.[1] The basic model of SEZ was structured with the establishment of Asia's first Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was in the Port city of Kandla in the state of Gujarat in 1965.[2] Seven more zones were set up thereafter. However, the zones were not able to emerge as effective instruments for export promotion on account of the multiplicity of controls and clearances, the absence of world-class infrastructure and an unstable fiscal regime. While correcting the shortcomings of the EPZ model, some new features were incorporated in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Policy announced in April 2000 as a part of the EXIM Policy.

This policy was operationalised byadedicated SEZ Actin February 2006. With the passage of the SEZ Act, 2005 the earlier EPZs which had been set up by the Central Government were converted into SEZs. Further, the new policy of 2000 paved the way for establishment of SEZs by the State governments and the private sector. As per Section 5 of the SEZ Act, 20053 the guiding principles for notifying an SEZ shall be-(a) generation of additional economic activity (b) promotion of exports of goods and services; (c) promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources; (d) creation of employment opportunities and (e) development of infrastructure facilities.In a short span of about ten years since the SEZ Act and Rules were notified in February, 2006, formal approvals have been granted for setting up of 405 SEZs out of which 328 have been notified. Out of these 328 notified SEZs, 24 are located in Gujarat. Out of the total employment provided to 16,88,337 persons in SEZs as a whole 15,53,633 persons is incremental employment generated after February, 2006 when the SEZ Act came into force. This is apart from millions of man days of employmentgenerated by the developers for infrastructure activities.[4]

This paper explores the quantitative and qualitative aspects of livelihood opportunities created in these zones for the women workforce. It goes into the employment opportunities created in terms of numbers for females and also the type of jobs that utilise the services of women in the SEZs.Also, it explores the where and how of increasing the presence of women in export-oriented manufacturing and services in these zones.

A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, financial and social capital), the activities and the access to these (meditated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by individual or household.5The generation of employment opportunities ensures income, creates non-pecuniary benefits, improves quality of life of labour and enhances their productivity which in turn leads to reduction of poverty. Evidence suggests that women's share to total employment in SEZs is substantiallyhigher than both the economy as a whole as well as the manufacturing sector outsidethe SEZs.6Women workers are considered moredisciplined and hard working. It is found that employers prefer female workers tomale workers in the belief that manual dexterity, greater discipline and patience makewomen more suitable for the unskilled and semi-skilled activities carried out in thezones. Besides, they are less likely to exertpressure for high wages and betterworking conditions. Majority of women are young, single and come from rural andpoor backgrounds. But for SEZs they might not have been absorbed into

formalemployment at all and hence SEZ employment can be said to afford them anindependent source of income that would otherwise have been denied. SEZs are thusexpected to contribute substantially to the empowerment of women.7 A study conducted by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) titled 'Impact of SEZs on Employment, Poverty and Human Development', says women constitute a higher proportion of the working population in SEZs at 25 per cent than in the organised sector.8Some of the work reviewed by Ghosh who collates the fact young women form the bulk of the work force in most Export Processing Zones.9

Situated in the westernmost part of India, and surrounded by Arabian Sea, Gujarat is gifted with a 1600 kms coastline which supports a large number of natural harbours and ports. Due toits geographical location, most of the SEZ's in Gujarat are concentrated on the coastal corridor of Mundra, Dahej Jamnagar, Jambusar and Hazira. SEZs in Gujarat comprise of large number of women workers especially in apparel and light assembling based work. While there is plenty of work to go around, these aren't jobs to be envied. Large number of the total workforce in SEZs is made up of contract workers, who do not enjoy any of the benefits and privileges that regular employees do.Indira Hirway points out that more than inadequacy of employment, poor quality of employment seems to be a major problem in Gujarat.10 In 2008 the SEZs established by the Central Government women constituted 36.58% of the workforce while the State Govt./Private SEZs women constituted a meagre 14.79% of the employees.Among the Government owned SEZs, Madras Export Promotion Zone ranks first followed by Falta in providing employment to women. They employ 56.48 and 51.63 per cent women respectively. Cochin and Visakhapatnam employ around 44 per cent of women. The Kandla SEZ in Gujarat has 48.05 per cent in its workforce. Noida SEZ has the least number of women. Noida comprises of third generation firmswhich include drugs and high value electronic and engineering products whereas MEPZ includes first generation firms like textiles, food and leather which are mostly labour-intensive. Falta encompasses second generation firms which are skill-intensive like gems and jewellery and software engineering. One third of the labour force is women.

The private sector SEZs employ far less women compared to the ones set up by the Central Government. However, there are some notable exceptions such as the Mahindra City and Surat Apparels which employ 73.35 per cent and 27.42 per cent respectively. However, the Surat SEZ has 40 per cent of its workforce consisting of women. But in the SEZs in the service sector such as IT and ITES the share of women is quite high. However, in all SEZs the feminisation of employment and occupational segregation is clearly visible.

A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) points towards a crisis in female employment in India, where the female labour force participation is the lowest among BRICS with a 50 per cent gap between male and female labour force participation. According to the report, only a little above 30 per cent women workforce in the age between 15 and 64 years is employed in Gujarat, whereas states like Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh have close to 80 per cent of female workforce participation. States like Bihar, Assam and Delhi have seen under 20 per cent of their women workforce participating in the industries.

According to analysts, SEZs could effectively pull women out of the unorganised sector and create more jobs for new female entrants, with higher level of income and greater skills. The Nokia SEZ in Tamil Nadu, where women constitute 50 per cent of the workforce, recruited girls with secondary education in the 16-21 age groups, after imparting a three-month training programme. An interesting finding on the employment pattern of the SEZ units surveyed is that nearly 40 per cent of workers are women and 76 per cent of those hired are local people. In fact, new generation SEZs (formed after the SEZ Act came into being) employ far more women at 55 percent of the workforce as compared to the old Export Promotion Zoneslike Kandla that have been converted into SEZs, where women constitute 30 per cent of the workforce.11 SEZs have provided many job opportunities to many young women from rural and adjoining areas have been instrumental in reducing poverty in these regions.

SEZs have created a positive effect as far as the growth rate of employment is concerned. A study of the share of women in Central Government and state/Private SEZs give a greater insight onto the status of women and their participation levels. Approximately one-third of the people employed are women. In the year 2008, only 32.48 per cent of the labour force in SEZs was women.In the Central Government SEZs 35.58 per cent were women whereas in the other it was a meagre14.79 per cent. However, the levels of employment and the nature of positions held depends upon their specialization and the type of SEZ.

Conclusion:

The year 2016 was a turning point in global demographic trends. It was the first time since 1950 that the combined working age (WA) population (15-59) of the advanced countries declined. Over the next three decades, the United Nations (UN) projects that China and Russia will each see their working age populations fall

by over 20 percent. India, however, seems to be in a demographic sweet spot with its working-age population projected to grow by a third over the same period; always remembering that demography provides potential and is not destiny.The policy makers would need to target labour-intensive sectors. The apparel, leather and footwear sectors meet many desirable attributes for policy attention: bang- forbuck for creating jobs, especially for women, opportunities for exports and growth. Rising labour costs means that China is gradually vacating its dominant position in these sectors, affording India an opportunity. To not cede this space to competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh will require innovative policy interventions in the SEZ sector. Gujarat already has a marked presence in these sectors. It only needs to focus on how a major share of the additional employment generated can be in favour of women.

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INDIAN DIASPORA AND GLOBAL GUJARATIS:

Dr. Priyanka Arora

Abstract:
The Indian diaspora is the largest in the world. It has grown apace in the past three decades to over 20 million people spread over all continents. Much of the history of early migrations of cosmopolitan traders and merchants from India before the 18th century hardly produced any significant diasporas, but they played an important role in the economy and culture of the adopted lands. Long before the British established an imperial presence in the sub-continent, there were traditions of movement among the people of the Indian sub-continent to travel within and outside by land and sea. Several later patterns of migration were founded on this tradition of voluntary migrations. East African region consists of three countries namely Kenya, Taganyika, and Uganda. Gujaratis are in significant number among the Indians who migrated to this region in Africa. The paper throws light on the contributions of the Gujarati diaspora to their land of origin within the overall framework of the Indian community abroad.

Keywords: Diaspora, Gujaratis, Remittances, Developmental, Non-Resident Indians.

Introduction:

"Daispore", a Greek word meaning "dispersion', was first used to describe the dispersion of Jews, before being applied, in the late 1960s to other religious groups, followed by ethnic groups such as Armenians.[1] A diaspora can be defined as members of ethnic and national communities, who have left, but maintain links with their homelands.[2] Some countries use a legal definition to describe their diasporas as all persons who are of that nationality and their descendants. It includes all the descendants who can acquire citizenship. The definition of diaspora varies by country. India defines diaspora as all overseas Indians which comprises: Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians(NRIs).[3] Overseas Indians display a strong bond with their country of origin. This is reflected in their language, cultures and traditions that have been maintained, often over centuries, and continue to be vibrant and unique.

Origin countries also use different definitions of diasporas. For example, India uses three categories: NRl (Non-Resident Indians), PIO (Persons of Indian Origin) and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI). There are about 10 million NRIs living in different parts of the

world. The main concentration of NRIs is in the Gulf. The number of PIOs is estimated to be about 12 million from which the largest group of PIOs live in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, the US, South Africa, Mauritius, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Nepal. The total number of overseas Indians reached 22 million in 2012.[4] India does not allow for dual citizenship but offers an identification card that entitles migrants to specific rights. It issues a PIO card that allows for entry without a visa during the period of its validity. The card also allows a person access to all facilities in the matter of acquisition, holding, transfer and disposal of immovable properties in India.

Among the Indian Diaspora spread over more than 110 countries, Gujarati Diaspora (NRGs) have emerged as the most dynamic and visible and the most widespread community across regions of the world. They constitute the largest emigre group from India. Estimated around 32 to 38 per cent of the total Indian Diaspora worldwide, they are most visible among the NRIs in USA, the UK, East Africa, Myanmar, Canada, Fiji and New Zealand. They are the most affluent community among the NRI community in USA, the UK and East Africa. Their number vary from only three in Slovenia to 306,000 in the UK and more than 6,00,000 in U.S.A.; 40,000 in Malawi to a few thousand in New Zealand. There are 10,000 Hindus speaking Gujarati and 5,000 Parsis who speak Gujarati in Pakistan. In some countries their figure has dramatically changed as contextualized by the changing political scenarios of their adopted land. For example, population of Gujaratis in Kenya in 1954 was around 5400 which dwindled around early 1970s, but again increased to around 1,00,000 around 2002.The violent conflict of 2007-08 between its two main political tribal parties has again caused erosion in their strength. They were three to four times this number when the country became independent. Such experience was somewhat replicated in case of NRGs living in Fiji and Uganda. Early migrants mainly from Saurastra and Kheda districts settled in Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar and Tanganyika as labourers where they helped build railway line in most difficult terrain that created the phenomenon of what the British called "Patel Railways". They went to South Africa as Girmitiya (contract labour) and as plantation labour in Fiji.

The Gujarati Diaspora does not consist of the Hindus only who obviously, dominate demographic statistics of Indiaspora. A good number are Muslims, including Khojas, Bohras and Isnashiris in Kenya, South Africa and the UK. Sunni and Shia Muslims in Reunion Islands and Mauritius are from South Gujarat. A Lancanshire based Muslim woman Auntie Yasmin has started a website service for Gujarati Muslims. Believed to be the first of its kind, the service caters to find prospective marriage partners. In the second half of the 20th century, Gujaratis started getting visibility as motel owners, investors, doctors, IT professionals, and even astronauts. Polished diamond exports constituted 17 percent of India's exports in 2002-2003. Over 90 percent of these diamonds were processed in Gujarat, employing over 1 million people in the state. Concomitant with India's rising status as a world leader in the diamond industry over the past 35 years has been the ascent of Indian emigres (mostly Gujarati Palanpuri Jains) in the world diamond trade.[5]Among all the Asians and Europeans, it was the Gujaratis who dominated the business world of East South Africa. As yet there has been no systematic study of the socio-cultural background of those Gujarati emigrants.[6]

Historically, diasporas have played an important role in facilitating global trade. Indeed, merchant and trading communities from non-Western societies played a significant role in the

so-called globalization of modern economic life, often in the shadow (and sometimes independently) of the colonialism and imperialism of prominent Western powers. Business, especially international business, requires enforcement mechanisms and trust, and diaspora networks, adapt at internalizing these mechanisms, were especially successful in services such as trade, finance and shipping.[7]

Diasporas are not only key drivers in developmental efforts but also in strengthening bilateral relations between host and home nations. 'This potential of the diaspora has gained growing international recognition, both in political and academic circles as well as among diaspora members themselves. Several countries of origin have attempted to formulate polices of diaspora engagement in order to use their overseas communities as a resource for development. Such polices range from securing better welfare conditions for their migrants abroad to promoting investment and contributions to development. Moreover, remittances remain a key resource flow far exceeding official development assistance as well as private debt and portfolio equity. India, China, Mexico and Philippines remain the largest recipients of migrant remittances. Both sending and receiving countries are beginning to implement policies to boost flows of financial resources, information and technology from diasporas.

Conclusion:

Human resource mobility is an essential feature of today's globalised world where integrated world markets, networks and technologies are all contributing to the increasing movement of labour, students, professionals, and families. The International Organization for Migration prescribes a four-pronged approach for effective diaspora engagement. This approach lays down four fundamental actions[8]: i) identifying goals and capacities (eg. investment, knowledge, remittances), ii) mapping diaspora geography and skills (eg. analysis of census data, mapping of diaspora organizations), iii) creating a relationship of trust between diasporas and government of both origin and destination countries (eg. privileges to non-resident expatriates and descendants, flexibility in pilot projects); and iv) ultimately mobilizing diasporas (eg. integrating diasporas into development planning and policy implementation). The migrants of today are the diaspora of tomorrow and those of yesteryears, that of today. Government on both sides of the migration chain increasingly recognize the value of the diasporas' voluntary engagement with their countries of origin and are seeking ways to optimize this engagement. Governments facilitate diaspora contributions in several ways from creating conducive legal frameworks and diaspora-centred institutions to initiating programmes specifically targeting diaspora as development actors. Yet these and other mechanisms of diaspora engagement while positive are insufficient if not integrated in a broad-based strategy that receives sustained attention over the years. Such a strategy, must, of course, be tailored to the needs of each diaspora population, which has a unique relationship with its country of origin or ancestry and countries of destination or settlement.

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THE SEWA MOVEMENT: EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN OF BANASKANTHA(GUJARAT):

Dr. Priyanka Arora

Abstract:

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a national level trade union dedicated to the informal women workers of India. The organisation has contributed immensely to various facets of the Women's movement such as to the labour movement, cooperative movement, women's movement in general and more specifically to that of self-employed women and health movement in India and abroad. The paper aims to throw light on the socio-economic activities undertaken by SEWA at the grass-root level to make women self-employed, self-reliant, self-diligent and self-dependent in the Banaskantha district of Gujarat. It delineates SEWA's initiatives in generating alternative sources of employment for women which are being made available to the region where there are hostile climatic conditions, acute scarcity of water, increased migration, limited access to capital and also limited employment opportunities. The organization's initiative in the rural organizing process with its need-based integrated approach towards empowerment has transformed the lives of rural women of Gujarat particularly in the district of Banaskantha. The SEWA entities are democratic, self-managed and sustainable in terms of their functioning and work on the principle of full employment and self-reliance to produce individual and collective empowerment. It is both a union and a movement -A national, and now increasingly, a global movement of informal women workers, organizing for their rights, for recognition and inclusion in national plans, programmes and legislation.

Key-words: Informal, Women, Banaskantha, SEWA, empowerment, movement

Introduction:

The World Bank defines empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.[1] The declaration of the International women's decade in the year 1975 brought to forefront the role of women as major partners in the development of an economy. Empowerment can be measured by the ability of the collective to alter conditions (social, economic, political and cultural) that it finds intolerable, by its success at an educated role and ability to voice popular concerns and interests. As Srilatha Batiwala observed, "In grassroots programmes and policy debates like empowerment has virtually replaced terms such as

welfare, upliftment, community participation, and poverty alleviation to describe the goal of development and intervention."[2]

Established in 1972[3] by Ela Bhatt, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)[4] is a "movement" of self-employed women in rural and urban India, and is the largest trade union of the country which began in the city of Ahmedabad, the principal city in the state of Gujarat, on the western coast of India. It has pioneered the empowerment of self-employed women and of women employed in informal economy enterprises (i.e., small, unregistered enterprises) and informal economy jobs (i.e., jobs without secure contracts, worker benefits and social protection) where 93 per cent of India's female labour force is employed.[5] These people are the poorest of the poor who work for meagre wages and thus, are the most vulnerable to fluctuations in the labour market. SEWA not only provides a voice to the numerous yet unprotected women workers, but also seeks to ensure work and income security, food security and social security for all its members and to promote women's leadership at the micro, meso and macro levels. And since 1989, SEWA has been involved in organizing rural development programmes in Banaskantha. For over two-and-a-half decades, SEWA has struggled to empower these members through a twin strategy of labour union struggle and development through income-generating activities.[6]

The organisation's first main project in rural India began in Banaskantha which is an arid, drought prone district in the north-western Gujarat where water is scarce and so are employment opportunities. The Banaskantha[7], as its name denotes, comprises of two words namely Banas and Kantha. Banas is the main river flowing through the district and Kantha means the bank of the river i.e. the district consists of the territories situated on and around the river Banas. Banaskantha is among the 5th most populated district in the state. In 2011, men's literacy rate was 65.32 percent, while that for women was at 51.75 percent. With a low sex ratio of 938 females per 1000 males, the district of Banaskantha also displays severely discriminatory conditions for women and girls with regard to health and employment. The economy of the district is basically dependent on agriculture as 66.16 % of workers are engaged in agricultural activities. 33.84 % of workers are engaged in other non-agricultural activities. Arid conditions and lack of infrastructure made agriculture less productive. In agriculture, unemployment and poverty cause significant out-migration. SEWA had to adjust its strategy to these patterns of "distress migration", especially since creating institutions and structures such as producer's groups and cooperatives is not an easy task when entire household leaves the village. Creating productive and sustainable livelihoods in villages thus, became imperative for SEWA's activities in Banaskantha. Also, frequent drought aggravates the employment situation even more and a severe earthquake hit the region in 2001 which destroyed a number of water pipelines. These precarious physical conditions have compounded the low levels of development which persist in this region. As economic security is crucial to the empowerment of women, the organisation sought to offer full employment to produce income security to its members. As a trade union, it organized its members to demand fairness and justice and fight for the right to seek a livelihood[8]. Thus, SEWA hired volunteer village leaders to help organize SEWA's local activities and meetings. Soon after, SEWA had set up an office in Radhanpur town to manage its activities in Banaskantha.

SEWA's Water Campaign also referred as the Millenium Campaign gained momentum in the year 1995. The Watershed Development Programme is a national programme that integrates several water-based development strategies in arid, semi-arid and drought prone areas. In 1995, the Banaskantha DWCRA Mahila SEWA Association (BDMSA) organized the village women directly to take the leadership role in watershed development. The activities included the construction of check dams, tree planting, land-levelling and contour binding. They have now formed new water committees independent of the previous constraints put upon the pani panchayats in 1987 where a team of SEWA members was invited to look into the proposed Indo-Dutch project of supplying drinking water through pipelines to the villages of Radhanpur and Santhalpur talukas of the Banaskantha district in northern Gujarat which are some of the poorest and underdeveloped districts of Gujarat.

SEWA's regional development and action-oriented research approach, enabled women to become leaders of their own programmes. SEWA began organizing women as water-users and identified the existing local skills and resources available. The information gathered through this process then formed the basis for identifying a diverse range of economic activities and would integrate women, water and work. As a result, they have a more assured water supply and a significantly improved access to work, capital, markets and social security. SEWA's strategy was to augment the existing traditional sources of water such as village ponds and tanks, build water supply, build up democratically functioning water-user groups or cooperatives and thereby, influence and facilitate the functioning of the pani-panchayats. And later on, SEWA started mobilizing the local communities for taking up the revival of the traditional water sources and building local resources by way of contributions from the people themselves and some funds from the government. Roof rainwater harvesting is one of the most welcome interventions. Through the association, the women's groups have constructed a large number of rain water harvesting tanks, community tanks, and plastic-lined village ponds and have recharged several wells. Moreover, after some basic training, one group has taken over the repair and maintenance of hand pumps in the villages.

With the help of Foundation for Public Interest, a development research organization, SEWA surveyed the skill base of the women in Radhanpur and Santhalpur taluka. The survey brought to light that nearly 80 percent of the women in Banaskantha district had embroidery skills. All the traditional rural castes and communities (the Ahirs the Jats, the Rabari, and the Mochis) had their unique style of embroidery passed down from mothers to daughters. The complex and rich embroidery products were a family's pride, but most women had no idea of the market value of their handicrafts, and had little information on a fair price for their products, since they rarely travelled outside their villages. Lack of information and a desperate need for income often led them to sell their unique work for a pittance to visiting traders. SEWA began by making these women aware of the real value of their products and by finding a market for them. Then it directly bought those products from the women and sold them in Ahmedabad. Following this experience, SEWA decided to link its activities to a government scheme called the Development of Women and Children in rural areas (DWCRA) launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in 1982. Under the scheme, 15-20 women were offered loans and subsidies to start income-generating activities to supplement their income and to help them

access health care, children, and nutrition. The embroidery group set up by SEWA were linked to the DWCRA project. This collective effort towards earning a sustainable livelihood and leadership was a major experience for the women, many of whom earned a new-found respect from their families and communities due to their entrepreneurial ventures. Other DWCRA groups were started in the Banaskantha district for women salt farmers, gum collectors, forestry and agricultural workers, and marginal farmers. It also formed savings and credit groups for women in Banaskantha to help them build capital for their business. Producer groups significantly transformed the lives of these women and their communities as they enabled women to use their traditional skills productively for themselves and their families. As a result, the Banas Craft in Ahmedabad serves as a centre for marketing research and exhibition scheduling and Radhanpur Craft Development Centre serves to catalogue designs, collect and store the crafts as well as the raw materials, and organize a production schedule. Further, the centre has become the headquarters of all SEWA and BDMSA activity in Banaskantha. The SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre is, perhaps the first of its kind in India, formed by 15,000 artisan shareholders who are the suppliers and producers of the company. SEWA, the Kutch Craft Association and Banaskantha DWCRA Association are the promoters of the Company.

In 1993, SEWA formed the Banaskantha DWCRA Mahila SEWA Association (BDMSA) a district-level association linking together all the producer groups created under the DWCRA plan and honed with SEWA's efforts. At the time, there were 91 rural producer groups totalling 40,000 women. SEWA managed the BDMSA till 1996, when it became a self-managed affiliate federation with a separate finance and governance structure. As an independent federation, each DWCRA rural producer group elects' leaders to the Executive Committee of the BDMSA, while SEWA provides training and capacity building in managerial skills, including accounting, finance, administrative management, marketing services and liaisons between the groups and government departments wherever necessary.

Moreover, the "Feminize our forests" campaign is a major example in which the SEWA members are creating green belts to fight desertification by persuading and involving villagers in nursery raising and tree plantation activities. Despite, acute water shortage in these areas women have taken initiative to work hard and improve the environment. By organizing themselves into local self-help groups and co-operatives to handle forestry activities as a campaign such as raising of saplings, conversion of wasteland into green forest forest-cover, preservation and protection of forests, collection and grading of minor forest produce, seed collection, vermiculture, clonal propagation etc. With these activities, women not only gain adequate employment but through regular training they are groomed into capable women known as barefoot foresters having the knowledge of common, local tree species, seed identification, scientific raising of sapling, preparing grafts, marketing, pricing, and accounting. Such grass-root leaders take initiative as spearhead team members in the forestry campaign.

Therefore, in addition to integrating the informal sector into the mainstream economy, the SEWA strategy seeks to incorporate the diversity of productive activities into a multidimensional, employment-based approach. The empowerment process holistically

includes increased employment opportunities, access to social security, collective strength through organization, improved nutrition, improved access to healthcare, improved access to childcare, improved housing, water and sanitation, increased assets, strengthening organization, strengthening of women's leadership and increased self-reliance. In other words, from the activism of the SEWA labour union and the innovations of the SEWA bank to the scholarship of SEWA Academy, the movement embraces them all. The organisation's programmes are demand-driven and need-based. As a membership organization, the members are the ones who choose the organization's leadership, make the organization's decisions and form the development strategy. Today, Banaskantha DWCRA Mahila SEWA Association (BDMSA) is a vibrant, dynamic, self-reliant organization with a membership of 35,000 members with decrease in migration of the members and their families and with work, stability and their own organization.

Conclusion:

The SEWA movement has based its approach for empowerment of women on the twin pillars of organization for collective bargaining and income generation. The adoption of this two-pronged strategy has led to the improvement in the capacity of women forming part of the target group to receive essential basic services such as education, health, training etc. The organisation believes that 'self-employed women must organize themselves into sustainable organizations so that they can collectively promote their own development'. Some of these organizations are trade-based while others provide social security. Some operate at village level while others at district, state and national levels. There are 96 cooperatives with a total strength of 78,000 members, 3200 producer groups and 6,000 savings and credit groups.[9] Other sister organizations provide social security through services like health care, childcare and insurance. These organizations serve to link members to the larger economic structures of the national and the regional economy such as SEWA Union, SEWA Bank, SEWA Cooperative Federation, SEWA District Association, SEWA Social Security, SEWA Academy, SEWA Marketing, SEWA Housing.

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॥ शब्दाभ्यर्चनोत्ति प्रकाशो ॥
શબ્દસૃષ્ટિ

ગુજરાત સાહિત્ય અકાદમી
ગુજરાતી, હિન્દી, સંસ્કૃત, સિંધી, ઉર્દૂ અને કચ્છી સાહિત્ય અકાદમી
રમતગમત, યુવા અને સાંસ્કૃતિક પ્રવૃત્તિઓ વિભાગ, ગુજરાત સરકાર

ક્રમાંક:ગસઅ/શબ્દસૃષ્ટિ/૧૧૪/૨૦૨૨ તા.:૧૦/૦૨/૨૦૨૨

પ્રતિ,

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'શબ્દસૃષ્ટિ' સામયિકમાં પ્રકાશિત કરવા માટે આપશ્રી દ્વારા મોકલેલ કૃતિનો સ્વીકાર કરવામાં આવેલ છે. જે બદલ અભિનંદન. આપની કૃતિને એપ્રિલ-૨૦૨૨નાં અંકમાં શબ્દસૃષ્ટિમાં છાપવામાં આવશે.

- કૃતિનું નામ:- સ્ત્રીશક્તિ

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